A METHOD OF MAKING LEAF PRINTS

By Edward W. Berry

The following method of making prints of leaves while not new has much to recommend it and seems worthy of having attention called to it in print. It has proven by far the most satisfactory which I have utilized during a life-long interest in leaf study. I do not know the original discoverer, nor does it matter particularly. The process was described in the Scientific American a decade ago and more recently Julia E. Rogers* in "A New Method of Knowing our Tree Neighbors" gives an illustrated account of how it is done, crediting her information to W. W. Gillette, of Richmond, Virginia. The process was deemed of sufficient utility to form the subject of one of the Cornell Home Nature Study leaflets some years ago and finally it has been utilized abroad for a number of years for the purpose of furnishing cheap and accurate reproductions in paleobotanical works of existing leaves with which the fossil leaf species were compared.

The necessary outfit is cheap and simple and consists of a small quantity of printers' ink, a smooth surface eight to ten inches square on which to distribute it, a piece of glass or slate will answer, or a stone slab can be purchased from any printers' supply house for a small sum. Two rollers are needed—one an inking roller such as is used by printers in "pulling" small proofs. This is known technically as a "brayer" and various sizes can be purchased at prices ranging from fifty cents upward. I find that a fifty-cent one answers my purposes very well. The other roller is one such as is used in photographic work either of rubber or faced with rubber and costing from thirty-five cents upward. A small bottle of benzine for cleaning purposes is also useful. The process is as follows: A small quantity of ink, a teaspoonful or less, is placed on the slab and rolled to a thin film with the proof roller. Then the leaf is laid on the slab and carefully rolled with the same roller until a thin film of the ink uniformly coats both sides. The leaf is then placed between

*Country Life in America 18: 66, 88. 1910.

two sheets of paper and rolled with the photographic roller, care being taken that the pressure be uniform and the paper be not allowed to slip or wrinkle. The result is an accurate and artistic print of both surfaces of the leaf, which should be allowed to become thoroughly dry before handling as the thick

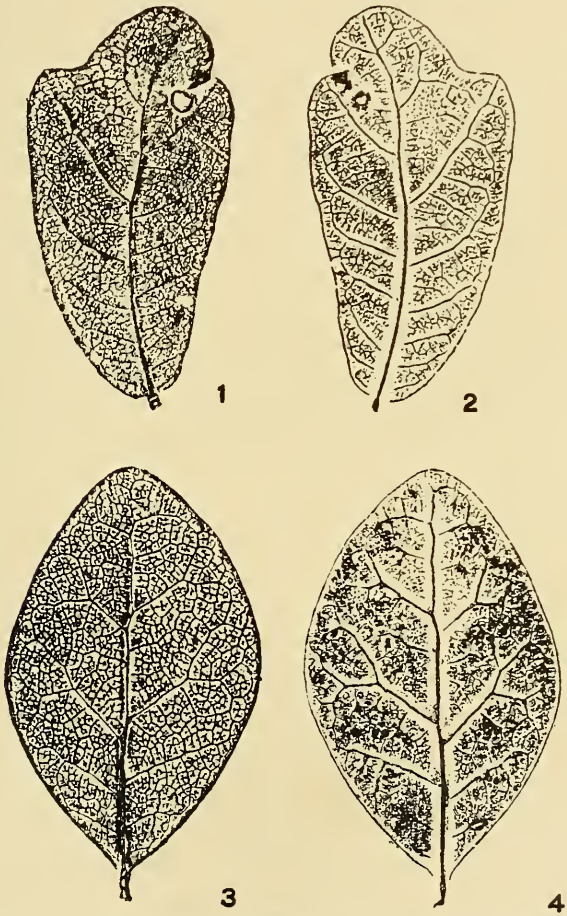

FIG. 1. — 1 and 2. *Quercus Chapmani*. 3 and 4. *Quercus myrtifolia*.

ink offsets and rubs for several hours. These prints when well done can be used for the making of line or half-tone cuts or the same process could be used in making transfers for lithographic

purposes. The various advantages of this process are obvious. As a means of interesting both young and old in becoming acquainted with the trees of their neighborhood this method has no equal and need not be dwelt upon in the present connection. As an aid to paleobotanical work it is also extremely useful. It is not necessary to dry the leaves as fresh ones answer equally well, although dried leaves from the herbarium give equally good prints if they are reasonably flat and not too brittle. The prints show both surfaces as the result of a single operation and the varying appearance of the vascular system on the two surfaces is especially valuable for comparison with fossil leaf impressions. From fifty to one hundred can be made within an hour and with a little practise the results are uniformly excellent. The accompanying illustrations are chosen to show this feature although these particular prints are much less artistic than dozens of other leaf species which might have been selected. The upper figures show the upper and under print of a leaf of *Quercus Chapmani* while the lower figures show the corresponding surfaces of a leaf of *Quercus myrtifolia*, both oaks of our extreme southern states.

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A NEW PLUM FROM THE LAKE REGION OF FLORIDA

By Roland M. Harper

The lake region of Florida,* which was scarcely known to botanists before the researches of Mr. George V. Nash in 1894,† has yielded a rich harvest of plants new to science, probably at least 75 species, about half of which are not at present known outside of this region. By far the greater number of these were discovered in the central part of Lake County by Mr. Nash in the year named, and many of them were described by him.

*The boundaries and most striking characteristics of this region have been indicated by the writer in Ann. Rep. Fla. Geol. Surv. 3: 223–224. *pl. 16.* 1911.

†See Bull. Torrey Club 22: 141–161. 1895.